

Free & Reduced Meal Eligibility



Regulations & Procedures



Words & Terms:

 <u>Determining Official</u>, <u>Approving Official</u> & <u>Certifying Official</u> ---- All refer to the person responsible for determining/approving the eligibility of the application

 Hearing Official ----- Person/Position designated in the District Policy Statement that is responsible for hearing appeals of benefit status



EACH SCHOOL YEARTO CLAIM REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEALS - SCHOOL MUST:

- Distribute applications to every student
- Have on file a <u>completed</u>, <u>currently</u> <u>approved</u> application for each student
- Applications must be retrievable by school



Prior Year Applications

- Returning Students: Last year's eligibility good for only 30 operating days in new school year
- New Students from households approved the previous year have the same eligibility
- Transfer or Promoted Students
 within same school district eat on last year's status





REMEMBER!!!

• IN ORDER FOR STUDENTS TO EAT

ON LAST YEAR'S STATUS,

THERE MUST BE AN <u>APPROVED</u>

<u>APPLICATION ON FILE</u>

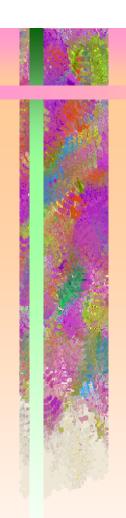
TO SUPPORT THE ELIGIBILITY!!!





IF YOUR SCHOOL
PARTICIPATES IN
DIRECT CERTIFICATION –

If available, YOU MUST USE THE NEW LIST BEGINNING THE 1ST DAY OF NEW SCHOOL YEAR.



PROCESSING TIMELINES:

Applications for New School Year
 Due no later than 30 operating days after 1st day of school.

NOTE:

Districts can set this deadline earlier

 Applications must be processed and household notified of eligibility status within 10 working days
 AFTER RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION.



- STUDENT CAN BE:
 - CATEGORICALLY ELIGIBLE:
 - Eligible based on Food Stamp Eligibility

By Either

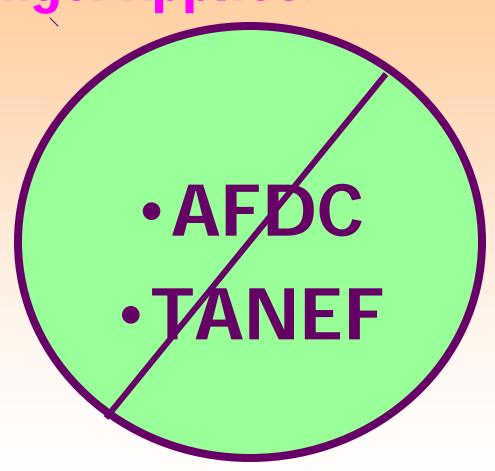
- Completing Application with Food Stamp Number
 OR
- 2. DIRECT CERTIFIED by Computer Matched No application Required



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- STUDENT CAN BE:
 INCOME ELIGIBLE with a
 HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION
 - Completed Household Application Must be Submitted
 - Sum of reported household income is at or below the income guidelines







Application Approved based on Food Stamp Eligibility:

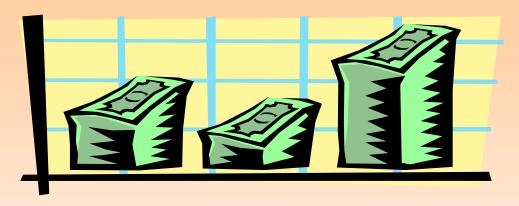
- Must contain the <u>name of the student</u>
- The appropriate <u>food stamp number</u>
- Signature of Adult Household Member



Application Approved based on Income Information

- Names of all household members including the student for whom the application is made
- <u>Current Income</u> received by each household member
- Social security number of adult who signs the application
- Signature of Adult household member





- Amount of income <u>received the previous month.</u>
- Income must be identified with individual who received it.
- Determining Official must compute income and compare it to the eligibility guidelines





- If income is received <u>every week</u>, multiply the total gross income by 4.33 to determine the monthly income.
- If income is received <u>every two weeks</u>, multiply the total gross income by 2.15 to determine the monthly income.
- If income is received <u>twice a month</u>, multiply the total gross income by 2 to determine the monthly income.



Missing Required Information

It must be obtained before determination can be made.

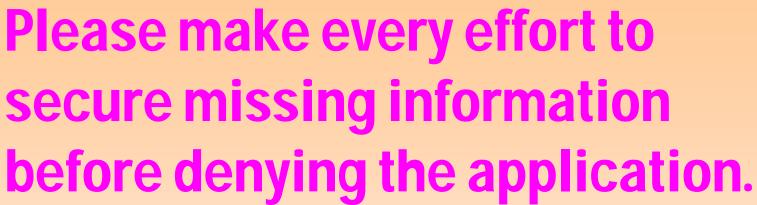
To secure missing information:

- Contact Household by phone
 or in writing. Document details of
 household response, initial & date
- Return application to household with note about information needed

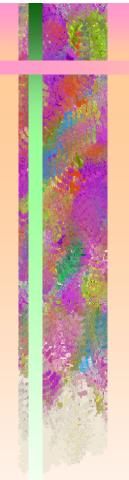




If <u>missing a signature</u> of adult household member, the application **must be** returned for signature.







TEMPORARY APPROVAL

When a household reports

Zero Income

OR

Temporary Reduction of Income

Eligibility must be determined based on the present rate of income.



Eligible Students should receive temporary approval in the following types of economic situations:

- Temporary Layoffs
- Strikes (voluntary work stoppage)
- Zero income, for whatever reason
- Temporary Disability



TEMPORARY APPROVAL

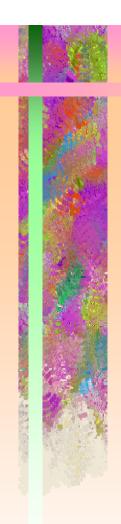


- Length of approval is for a maximum of ninety days (90) days
- Application status must be rechecked for changes every 90 days by determining official.





Zero income on an application for a foster child or institutionalized child is acceptable and may be approved for the school year.



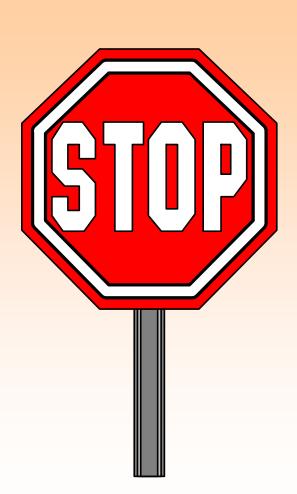
Household Fails to APPLY

- Determining Official may complete an application for a student known to be eligible if the household fails to apply.
 - School Official completes application based on best known information with regard to household size and income information available and makes the determination.
 - The source of information must be noted on the application. (Names of household members, social security number and signature of an adult household member need NOT be secured.)



Households Fails to Apply

- This option is intended for LIMITED USE in individual situations.
- It must not be used to make eligibility determinations for categories or groups of students.





Homeless Children

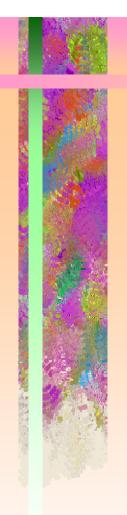
- Eligible for free meals if designated by LEA Homeless Liaison. (IA-03-005)
- Definition of Homeless-
 - Share housing due to loss of home
 - Living in shelter, motel, camp grounds
 - Nighttime residence in a place not ordinarily used-abandoned buildings, cars, parks, etc.
 - Migratory children who live in these circumstances



Homeless Children

 LEA Homeless Liaison must provide list to CN Director

- Child's Name
- Effective Date
- Signature of the LEA Homeless Liaison



Homeless Children

LEA Homeless Liaison must notify CN
 Director when these children leave or are no longer homeless.

 Determining official is responsible for giving household a free & reduced price application

Households <u>denied</u> benefits must be given <u>written</u> notification of the denial

- The notification must advise the household of:
 - The reason for the denial of benefits
 - The right to appeal
 - Instructions on how to appeal, and
 - A statement that households may reapply for free and reduced price benefits at any time during the school year.



Changes in Household Circumstances:

- Households must report:
 - Increases in income over \$50 per month or \$600 per year.
 - Decreases in household size

Determining Officials must review the information and make any appropriate change in eligibility and notify the household.



APPEALS

- Households may appeal:
 - Denial of benefits
 - Level of Benefits

When a household requests an appeal, the hearing procedures outlined in the district's policy statement must be followed.



Record keeping

- Approved Applications
 - Must have:
 - Date application is approved
 - Level of benefit for each student approved
 - Signature or initial of determining official

- Denied Applications
 - Must Have:
 - Identify and retain on file reasons for denial
 - Date of denial
 - Date Denial Notice is sent to Household
 - Signature or initial of determining official



RECORD KEEPING

 All Applications – Free, Reduced, Denied, and Inactive SHALL be kept on file for a minimum of 3 years plus the current school year.

2002-2003 – Current Year 2001-2002 Year ONE 2000-2001 Year TWO 1999-2000 Year THREE





EXCEPTION for Record keeping

- Files must be kept longer if they are required by:
 - Audit Findings
 - Pay back of Reimbursement Is Required by Coordinated Review Findings

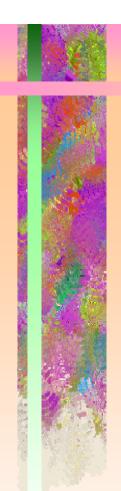
If audit findings have not been resolved, the applications must be <u>maintained as long as</u> required for resolution of the issues raised by audit.



Record Keeping

- Changes in Application Status:
 Application must have:
 - Note of change
 - Date of change
 - Change communicated on any rosters

When a child transfers to another school within the district, a copy of the application must be retained at both the sending and receiving schools and the date of transfer noted on the application.



Hungry Kids Can't Learn Thank You for Helping Them!

